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Thank God—and Repent!

BY EDGAR DEWITT JONES

Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations, ask thy Father and He will show thee, ask thy elders and they will tell thee. Deuteronomy 32:7.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Psalm 51:17.

IN THE ANNUAL PROCLAMATION of a President of the United States occurs this felicitious phrase: "Thanksgiving day is the most characteristic of our national observances." It is this and more—it is the most widely observed and the most predominantly religious of all our national celebrations. More than any other of our holidays, Thanksgiving has retained to a marked degree its original luster. Independence Day has suffered at the hands of political promoters and the flamboyant proclamation of a narrow nationalism. Likewise, the Christmas festival has sustained loss, and much merchandising has dimmed its spiritual glow. The birthday of Washington finds no general observance such as it deserves, but the celebration of Thanksgiving day is known and kept in some form or other all the way from the crowded metropolis to the remotest farmhouse. There is a certain mellowness in the day, a something fine and ennobling.

The first text of scripture I have selected is from the farewell address attributed to Moses and is as appropriate for this day, as it is impressive in tone. "The tongues of dying men enforce attention like deep harmony" and the dominant note in this scripture is gratitude for divine guidance in the past and deep solicitude for the future. In sober, almost pathetic

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speech the children of Israel are counseled not to forget the past and bidden to tell the story of the benignant Providence that prospered them all along the way. Thanksgiving in the year of our Lord 1929 is the time to remember the days of old in order to fulfill in the new days, the high hopes and aspirations of our holy faith.

A Day of Mystic Memories

This is a day of mystic memories of our nation's glorious youth. Youthful years are rainbowed with poetry and romance always. The high venturesomeness, the buoyancy, the dreams and visions, the sheer joy of living—these characterize and belong to youth, even the youth of a nation. The story of the settlement along New England's shores by the Pilgrims is more than a thrice-told tale, but never a threadbare theme. Mrs. Hemans is a minor poet but she struck a lofty strain in her "Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers." The meter, the phrases, the figures—all are in perfect accord with the theme. Her lines capture the imagination, and particularly fine are these stanzas:

> Amidst the storm they sang
> And the stars heard, and the sea,
> And the sounding aisles of the dim wood rang
> To the anthem of the free.
>
> And the ocean eagle soared
> From his nest by the white wave's foam,
> And the rocking pines of the forest roared—
> This was their welcome home.

This is not soft music; this is an organ note; this is fortissimo—a kind of hallelujah chorus! O, pioneers, star-eyed, brave-hearted, God-fearing, heroic men and women, how great our need for your faith, your fortitude, your willingness to endure hardship!

There is a picture of the Pilgrims on their way to church which has been copied so often and circulated so widely that almost every schoolboy has seen it. The little company has set out for the meeting house—men, women and children. The minister and his wife walk side by side—he carrying a copy of the holy scriptures. The men, wearing high-crowned hats and arrayed in their Sunday-best, bear arms and are on the watchout for some lurking enemy in ambush. It is in the dead of winter and snow is on the ground. In the background is the forest and at the edge the few houses of the little settlement. It may not be a great picture, according to artistic standards, but there is upon it such a light as never was on sea or land—demure maidens, sedate matrons, competent and fearless husbands and sons, a goodly company, and as you look at the picture you can only feel that their trust is not so much in the firearms which they carry as in the God "beneath whose guiding hand our exiled fathers crossed the sea."

A Day of Exultant Praise

This is a day of grateful and exultant praise to the heavenly Father for his bounties. The gratitude of the colonists that bleak December of 1621 was expressed with abandon and deepest sincerity. They thanked God for the rather meager crops that were theirs and praised him unstintedly for the wondrous way in which they had been led. When we recall how few their numbers, how far they were from their motherland and that they were encircled by perils both known and unknown, we cannot but marvel because of their simple faith, their grateful hearts and high courage. How myriad are the blessings that are ours, even after the fullest deductions have been made for loss, separation, grief and disappointments.

Let us thank God for his bounties. We cannot number his mercies. They are as the sands which by the seashore are innumerable. The Psalmist attempts to enumerate these blessings and is bewildered by the opulence that besets him behind and before. Embarrassed, but still articulate, he exclaims, "Let everything that hath breath, praise the Lord." Suppose we try to take stock: there is the wonder of his out-of-doors, the glory of sunrise and the beauty of sunset, the long wash of the surf on the beach, the majesty of mountain and the poetry of prairie, the vagrant flowers of the roadside and the cultivated creations that glorify the gardens; the lordly trees of forest and woodland pastures, the marvel of the heavens with their multitudinous stars, the witchery of shining moon. God be praised for this world in which we live with its colors and mysteries, scents and sounds.

> Ask for what end the heavenly bodies shine,
> Earth for whose use? Pride answers, "'Tis for mine;
> For me kind nature wakes her genial power,
> Suckles each herb, and spreads out every flower;
> Annual for me, the grape, the rose, renew
> The juice nectareous and the balmy dew;
> For me, the mine a thousand treasures brings;
> For me, health gushes from a thousand springs;
> Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;
> My footstool earth, my canopy the skies."

There are the flowers and fruits of friendship—have we not good reason to thank God for these? It was an American, H. Clay Trumbull, who wrote a widely read book entitled "Friendship—The Master Passion." An English publication offered a prize for the best definition of a friend, and among the thousands of answers received were the following: "One who multiplies joys, divides grief and whose honesty is inviolable." "One who understands our silence." "A volume of sympathy bound in cloth." "A watch which beats true for all time and never runs down." And here is the definition that won the prize—"A friend is the one who comes in when the whole world has gone out." Even as David thanked God for Jonathan and praised him in well remembered lines, so have we abundant reasons to thank God today for friends and to resolve to keep these friendships in constant repair.

A Day to Take Stock

There are also the joys and loves of family life, the tender and holy relations we bear and share in the home; for these too we thank God today. The debt we owe to husband, wife, father, mother, son and daughter has found expression in numerous ways and uniquely so in the dedicatory inscriptions authors place in their books. Thus General Lew Wallace dedicates "Ben Hur," his most famous work, "To the Wife of my Youth Who Still Abides with Me." Henry van Dyke puts this sentiment on the flyleaf of his "The

Blue Flower"—"To the memory of Bernard van Dyke, 1887-1888, and the love that lives beyond the years." And only a heart of exquisite tenderness could so find voice as Professor Walter Rauschenbusch in the dedication of his "Christianity and the Social Crisis"—"To the Women who have Loved me, My Mother, My Sisters, Frida and Emma; My dear Wife, Pauline, and my little Daughters, Winifred and Elizabeth."

Let us thank God for books: "the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured on purpose to a life beyond life;" for pictures, and that wide realm of art where every day may bring a fresh

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discovery or announce a new joy; for music, the ministry of melody, the world of haunting harmonies; for blessings such as these and myriad others unnamed, let our praises rise in glad hallelujahs. Even the deep and dark experiences, the disappointments and defeats, the sorrows and separations—are they really such, or only apparently so? Have we not lived long enough to discover that what we call darkness and defeat, but presaged light and victory? How incompetent we are to pass judgment upon the contemporary events or personal experiences of the day and hour. We are not yet able to see them in perspective and until we may, the lamp of faith must guide our feet.

And what abundant reason we have for gratitude because of what has been done by the peacemakers since last we observed this day. Not since the World War ended has the prospect of peace been so bright and heartening as it is at this hour. Since 1918 the path of peace has been as the path of the just which is "as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Since then seven milestones have been set up along the way to peace on earth and good will among men. I have not the time to linger by each of these milestones. I but name them and let them speak for themselves.

The seven milestones are: (1) The League of Nations, 1920, with its fifty-five members among the nations of the earth, operative and making history. (2) The Disarmament conference at Washington, 1921, a friendly gesture in which America showed her faith. (3) Locarno, 1925, which opened the way for Germany to enter the League of Nations. (4) The World Conference of Christians at Stockholm, 1925, with delegates from thirty-seven nations present and thirty-one communions participating. (5) the overseas flight in 1927 of Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh, the "Lone Eagle," who came like a good angel from the skies, a messenger of peace and good will to Europe, and in 1928 to Mexico. (6) The Pact of Paris, 1928, when war was declared an outlaw and the greatest nations of the earth through their representatives affixed their signatures. (7) The recent friendly conference between President Hoover and Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, with its promise of far reaching results. No Thanksgiving day since 1913 is so freighted with reasons for rejoicing as Thanksgiving in the year of our Lord 1929.

A High Dream

I dare to dream a dream. It is the year 1969, and I see a veteran of the great war, a member of the American legion, holding on his knee his first great grandchild. It is World Peace day, the anniversary of the day when the last nation became a signatory to the treaty outlawing war. Flags are flying, bands of music are playing. I hear the little boy asking questions, a habit of little boys everywhere. "Granddad," he asks, toying with the old man's military medal, "were you really in the war, that last great war?" "Yes, my boy," the veteran replies "it seems as a dream that men once fought each other like wild beasts, but it can never happen again, and someday you'll read the story how brave men, and true, fought the bloodless battles of peace. It was a long, hard fight, almost as hard as the fighting by land and sea where men suffered, bled and died host upon host. A glorious company of heroic men, my boy, gave their lives pioneering for peace, and a like company of noble women went to early graves that peace on earth might come. It was not an easy victory." The veteran sighs, then smiles. "And will there be anything noble for me to do when I grow up, Granddad?" "Aye, that there will, my boy. Work aplenty, and hard. The battles for justice, peace, and liberty are never finished. Every generation must serve this cause; and you will find a man's work awaiting you, in behalf of the new world and the better day.—But boy, it's time to listen to the radio. There is a world hook-up and the President of the United States of Europe and our own President have something to tell the world." I dare to dream this dream today, thanking God for the progress of peace on earth and good will among men the while.

A Day of Contrition and Penitence

This is a day of contrition and penitence, as indeed, every real Thanksgiving day must be. Praise and peni-

tence—they are twin graces of the truly religious. Reflecting on the blessings that have rained down upon us these hearts of ours ought to be greatly gentled. Who of us can say he has done his best? Ugly pride, downright selfishness, silly prejudices and childish intolerances have marred our lives. The scriptures admonish us that "a broken and a contrite heart" our God will not despise.

During the great war a story appeared which attracted much attention. It was the story of a mother whose unusually brilliant son gave his life on the field of battle. He was a genius and had flowered early. From youth up he had led his classes and won distinction at Oxford. He went to war and his life was blotted out instantly by an exploding shell. The mother dreamed a singular dream—she thought an angel appeared to her with the information that she might have her son back for five minutes. "Choose," said the angel, "what five minutes you will have. Will you have five minutes of his life when he was leading his classes at Oxford, or would you prefer to have five minutes of those days that he spent in the service of his country, those last days of his life?" The mother reflected for a moment and said, "If I can have him back for just five minutes, I should prefer to have him, not as the Oxford scholar, nor during his soldier days. If I can have him but five minutes, I want to have him as a little boy and on a day that he had disobeyed me. I remember how he ran into the garden, angry and rebellious, and then in a little while he came back and threw himself into my arms asking me to forgive him. His face was hot and red; he looked so small and miserable and so precious, I saw his love in his eyes, I felt his love in his body pressed against my own, and how my love went out to him. If I can have him only five minutes, I want him back as that dear little penitent boy."

This Parable Applies Today

Is not this a parable for us? Is there any greater need than that of repentance among the nations and individuals? What have we today to tell our children of the days of old? And, what is more vital still, what will they have to tell their children of us? Will they be able to say that we fought a good fight, that we kept the simple faith in God and man, that we banished hate from our lives and began the rebuilding of a broken world on a new basis of brotherhood? How can we have comradeship with our fathers in the memory of an heroic past unless we have also a fellowship with them in deeds of sacrificial service for which our generation waits?

So let us thank God and repent. Thank him for his many mercies, and repent of our shortcomings as a nation, as churches, as religious leaders and followers of the Christ. Let us repent of our foolish pride, exclusive spirit, snobbish ways. Let us repent of our partisanship, sectarianism, silly prejudices. Let us repent of our love of ease, creature comforts, sordid ambitions, passion for sheer achievements. Let us repent of our narrow nationalism, our parochial horizons, provincial ideals. Let us repent of our extreme prudence, caution and lack of adventuresomeness. Let us repent of the delusion that we need no repentance and other self-deceptions that have subtracted from our higher usefulness. Let us repent and bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. Let us bring to Almighty God the sacrifice of an humble and a contrite heart on this day of old memories and of new dedications and resolutions. We who are so little acquainted with sackcloth and ashes might at least pray this prayer with Gilbert Chesterton:

O God of earth and altar,
Bow down and hear our cry,
Our earthly rulers falter,
Our people droop and die;
The walls of gold entomb us,
The swords of scorn divide,
Take not Thy thunder from us
But take away our pride!

From all that terror teaches,
From lies of tongue and pen,
From all the easy speeches
That comfort cruel men,
From sale and profanation
Of honor and the sword,
From sleep and from damnation,
Deliver us, Good Lord!

Tie in a living tether
The priest and prince and thrall,
Bind all our lives together,
Smite us and save us all;
From ire and exultation
Aflame with faith, and free,
Lift up a living nation,
A single sword to thee!

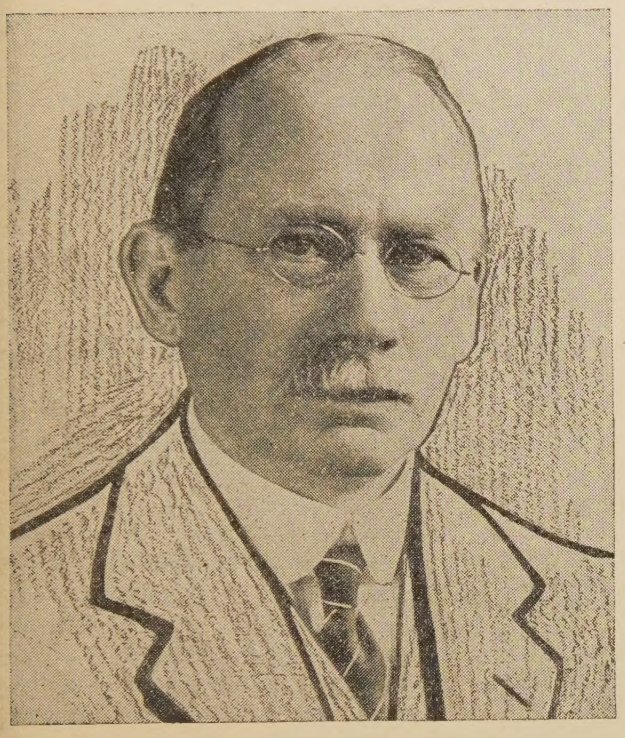
"Benediction"

By Rufus M. Jones

"And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all." 2 Cor. 13:14.

THESE words of peaceful benediction come at the end of one of the stormiest of all of St. Paul's epistles. He had been facing the possible collapse of his church, the most important church he had yet builded. First came a moral breakdown, then a division of the church into four groups, then a break in their loyalty to him, and his series of letters deal with all these profoundly serious situations. This one has been filled with advice and threatenings, and then suddenly, with a kind of hush, he used for the first time these words: "May that grace that was in Jesus Christ be in you." You won't have any quarrels then. May you be able to see what the love of God means and what it means to live in a world with your eyes open on the love of God, and may you discover that mightiest of all energies, the energy of the spirit, uniting you together in a fellowship, and in fellowship with him.

These words of benediction have been used for nineteen hundred years at the close of almost every Christian service. The service begins with the words: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven," and then it ends with the words, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all." We cannot help asking why more has not come of all this praying. The first reason is that it is a tremendous achievement we are praying for, and it would therefore of necessity be a slow achievement. But the other reason is more humiliating; it is that people have said



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these words without putting their lives behind the words. Henry Drummond used to tell of a shipwreck on the coast of Spain and of the life-saving service sending in this message: "Terrible storm on the coast last night. One hundred bodies washed ashore this morning. We rendered all the service we could through the speaking-trumpet." That certainly is not the way Grace Darling rendered her service. She launched the lifeboat in the storm and went out to save the shipwrecked men.

Praying and Achieving

When Jesus came back from those days in the wilderness, where he was fighting the supreme battle of his life to decide what his mission really was to be, what kind of kingdom he was here to build, Luke says that he went back to Nazareth and they asked him to lead the service in the synagogue, and he read his program from the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah: "The spirit of the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to give sight to people who cannot see, to open the prisonhouse to people who are bruised and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." And then closing the book he said: "This day this is going to be done, this day these words are being fulfilled in your ears, I am going out and do that." I wish every minister would say that after his sermon.

Christ and his apostles took certain great words that were very familiar to everybody and gave them new content. He took the word "peace," a word common to the Greeks, which for them meant a state of calm when nothing is happening to disturb, when danger is past. Peace for Christ and St. Paul is something which passes understanding. You can understand the peace that comes after trouble is over and danger is past, but the peace Christ talks about is something which comes right in the midst of stress and strain and the tug of pain, which garrisons your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

The great word of our text, "grace," is perhaps the most abused word in the whole history of the Christian world. To the Greek it meant beauty and charm; it was used in describing a sunset or a flower or a human face. But Christ takes the word and has it mean a state of spirit, something inside, a character of the inner life that prompts everything one does. It is the spirit that makes one understand those with whom one deals, makes one feel tender sympathy. Grace is always tender; it is a love that knows no limits or frontiers, that expects nothing in return for what it does and gives; it is not utilitarian. Grace thinks of nothing but its contribution. The old method had been fear. I heard of a little boy who came home from school crying bitterly. His mother asked him what was the trouble. He replied: "I couldn't spell a word." "But what is the trouble?" inquired his mother. "The teacher shook me, but I couldn't spell the word any better after she shook me than I could before." When Servetus was burned at the stake Sebastian Castellio wrote to Calvin these unforgetable words: "To burn a man is not to prove a doctrine; it is to burn a man."

Greatness of Small Things

William James wrote in a letter which is printed in his volume of letters: "I am done with great things and big things, great organizations and big successes, and I am for those tiny, invisible, molecular moral forces that work from individual to individual, creeping in through the crannies of the world like so many soft rootlets or like the capillary oozing of water, but which, give them time, will rend the hardest monuments of man's pride."

Those forces that work like rootlets! Living forces, forces of life! Christ found in grace his supreme force. He met an insane man who had a legion of devils. He had been bound with chains many times, but always broke the chains; had stripped off all his clothes and was running about cutting himself with sharp stones, so that everybody fled from him with fear. But Jesus looked at him quietly. He saw something in the face of Jesus that he had never seen in any other face, and soon he is sitting clothed and in his right mind, at Jesus' feet. It was grace that did it. Many years ago

I wrote an essay on "The Second Mile." The idea is taken from the old Roman soldier. He could requisition any man in the Roman empire to carry all his paraphernalia a mile, but he could not make him carry it more than a mile. Jesus had often seen that done. And he saw that the religion about him was like that. The Pharisee always wore a pedometer, and when he had gone his required mile he stood at the end of it and said, "I have done everything that is required of me." But Jesus said, You have not got anywhere in the first mile. The first mile student is no good. He does just what he is compelled to do, puts nothing of himself into his work. It is the second mile that counts, the mile you do not have to go, the gratuitous thing you throw in because your heart has been reached and your heart carries you even where your thought cannot travel; that is grace.

My mother was one of the greatest exemplars of this quality I ever knew. She left me one day to do a piece of work, and she and my father went off for the day. As soon as they were out of sight the boys of the village came and told me how fine the fishing was, and I went with them, intending to return, and to be hard at work before mother got back. But I miscalculated, and when I returned mother was standing in the door. She took me by the hand and started for my room. I knew what was just, and I knew what I was likely to get, but then came the miracle. Mother got down on her knees, put her hands on me and told God all about me and what she expected me to become, and interpreted my life to God; and then she bent over me and kissed me and went out and left me. What would you think of a boy who would go back on that kind of a mother? If she had taken a switch and applied it with vigor, it would not have made the least difference to me. I should have done the same thing again, but I never could after that. That turned my life. That is grace—the second mile.

What Is "Grace"?

Christ makes you realize that God is like that, and that is what the second part of this marvelous beatitude means, "and the love of God." We have glorified justice, supposing that to be the supreme thing. Most theories of the atonement are based upon justice. If justice is perfect, grace is pluperfect. The Christian church has not yet discovered what God is like, and you cannot have the supreme kind of religion until you have discovered that. I used to live in a house that had a pit of darkness in the cellar, and I was only less afraid of that than of the dark attic, the door of which opened directly from my room. Many people live with a scare-place above and beneath, and a whole world full of fear. Let us learn to live with the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in us and with the love of God over our lives.

But we need also new energies, new powers, a new spirit, new force. We need the Spirit of God flowing through us. Twice every day, out in the ocean, a great plateau of water is lifted thirty feet above the surrounding water, and as the earth turns round that great plateau of water breaks into our inlets and rivers and makes our tides. That water is lifted by invisible forces, but the forces are resident forces or they would not lift. You cannot get your life raised to its full place until you get somewhere into contact with these forces of the Spirit.

A few years ago, at West Point, some of the boys took a cannon and wrapped ten miles of copper wire around it, until they made a great coil of wire, and then hitched the wire to a dynamo and charged it. It turned the cannon into a mighty magnet, so that a cannon ball brought near it was caused to leap up and attach itself to the lip of the cannon. I have seen people charged like that. I never saw anybody who was much good until he was charged. That is the business of Christianity, getting people lighted up and charged. You know the difference right off when you have a person dynamized. What a world we would have if we had Christians everywhere lighted up and dynamized, who had the grace of Christ in their lives with a consciousness of the love of God and then had this energy of the Spirit!

Signs of the Times

By Francis J. McConnell

"Ye know how to discern the face of the heavens; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times." Matthew 16:3.

JESUS more than once found occasion to rebuke the Pharisees and Sadducees of his day for not being able to read the signs of the times. They could foretell the coming of rain from the appearance of clouds in the west, and the coming of heat from the shifting of the wind to the south, and the coming of fair weather from the red of the evening sky, but they could not read the significance of events in the moral realm. The implication of the word of Jesus seems to be that some events follow others in the moral sphere quite as naturally and inevitably as in Palestine heat follows the blowing of the south wind from the desert.

I use the text only for its suggestiveness as a starting point. I am not thinking of any peculiar blindness on the part of Pharisees and Sadducees, but of the common human inability of most of us to see the meaning of many obvious characteristics of the periods through which we live until the best chance to make good use of those opportunities is past.

We are moving today through a time whose characteristics have pretty clearly declared themselves, to the vast dismay of many of us. To begin with, when have any of us ever seen a time so thoroughly set on "expressing itself"? I do not wish to blame the great war for all that has happened in the last decade, but I do think that the war did remove many inhibitions, among them the inhibitions on speaking out anything that might flash, or leap, or crawl into our minds. The old notion was that speech was intended for the com-

munication of thought, but we got away from that limitation long ago. Speech today does not inevitably have to do with thought, or even with communication. Some of it is in the nature of ejaculations obviously intended for the self-relief of the speaker. It is as if the roofs were taken off of millions of intellectual dwelling-places and we could see everything that is, and is not, within. The age is indeed making a revelation of itself, and at first glance we feel almost buried under craziness and nonsense.

The Present Not So Bad

It may be that the situation is not as bad as it looks. The south wind is indeed blowing, and perhaps the heat will parch the life out of some things that have crawled out into the sunlight from the dark corners of our minds. At any event, if any considerable number of persons have been thinking the stuff that is being uttered today it is perhaps just as well to get it out in the open. Sunshine and heat will kill a good deal of it, and possibly sterilize the rest. Moreover, such an astonishing human phenomenon as the volume of utterance of the past decade must be of some social significance.

When, now, we once pull ourselves together we begin to see that an age, like an individual, finds itself by talking itself out. If we insisted that a baby talk sense, or not talk at all, he would not and could not talk. The truth is, once we get used to the deluge of speech pouring forth today, we are struck with certain almost childishly naive traits about the time in which we are living. We say of the present generation—whichever one that is—that it is disillusioned and sophisticated. These characterizations are singularly inept. The age is charmingly childish. It is a good deal as if phrases had been uttered so long in the ears of men that the hearers had forgotten that the words ever had a meaning. Now men are beginning to use the phrases as if they meant something. The first results are almost embarrassing in their freshness. The age is talking of human love, for example, as if this generation were the first to discover it, and as if the family were a contrivance invented not earlier than the civil war. The problem of evil in the universe, the difficulties in the idea of God, the general seaminess of human nature—all these are set out as if they were news. But that is no reason for pessimism. Somebody sneeringly said concerning Theodore Roosevelt, that he acted as if he had discovered the ten commandments. To which a Rooseveltian made the crushing rejoinder: "He has—for some people." This age is not doing much with the ten commandments, but it is discovering a good deal for itself. Moreover, it is far enough along now in its speech to enable us to see some of the vitality back of all the current utterance. Most of the utterance is nonsense, but most of any utterance is nonsense. After a while the tares can be sifted out, and we shall find quite a measure of good wheat which we never could have had if almost everything in men's minds had not got out. By the way, I fancy that if we all told the truth we should admit that we have ourselves thought a good many of the "silly" things now being uttered aloud. What a fine thing it is to discover in these days, when the most intimate self-revelations are spread out to the light, that a great man has confided to his diary the same kind of silliness that comes into your mind and mine! It makes us feel that we are not the only silly persons in the world, or perhaps that the great man was not the only wise person who ever lived.

It will not do for us to say that all that is true in the utterance of today was uttered, and uttered better, long ago. Abstractly considered, this judgment is sound enough. John Stuart Mill made a better indictment of the universe at the point of its cruelties than has any one in our time. A good many of the indictments of today sound like old stuff and poor stuff to those of us who read Mill in our youth; but that is not quite the point. The present age will not read Mill. If it is to face the hard facts of the universe it must face them in its own way, and likewise with the good facts. If the church of God will not fall into panic—and it is not likely to—it will soon hear, I am confident, very vital and compelling restatements of everything essential that the church has held dear. All the signs point that way. Whatever else we may say about the age in which we live, it is not dead or asleep.

Intellectual and Moral Fads

Again, the times in which we live are too much under the sway of intellectual and moral fashions, we are told. This charge is pretty well founded. Propaganda won the war, we are reminded, and all sorts of institutions today have the propaganda habit. With centralized control of the public press, and with like control of the radio, it is not impossible to make an intellectual fashion in very short order. We believe things because everybody else believes them, because it is the fashion to believe them. This refers not merely to matters of theory, but to matters of fact as well. Beliefs get into the air and we breathe them in as we do the air.

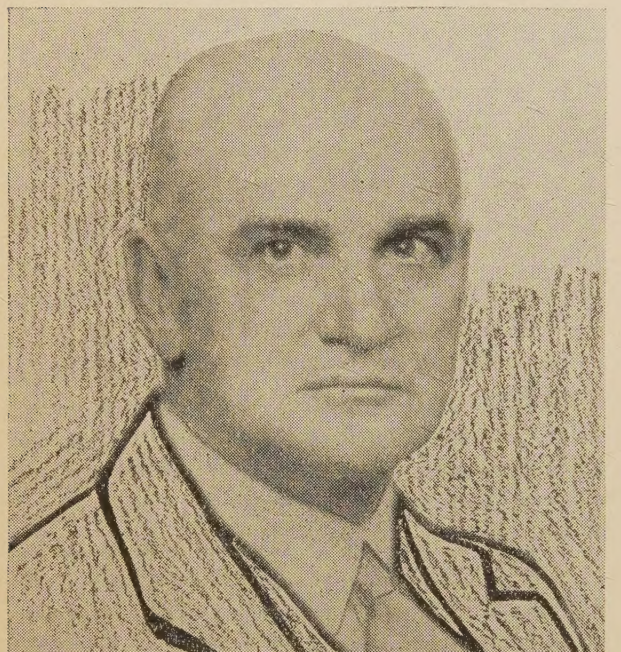
It has always been so, however. When I was a boy of eight or ten years, my grandfather used to tell me of a hoop-snake in the early days when the pioneers came into western Pennsylvania, and what is now eastern Ohio. The hoop-snake, according to my grandfather, could take its tail between its fangs, make a hoop of itself, and roll after a man with deadly precision. It had a needle-point filled with poison on the end of its tail which struck the victim as the snake let go. If the snake missed a man and struck a tree, said my grandfather, the tree would die before sundown. A good deal of which, even as a boy, I attributed to my grandfather's capacity as an entertainer. The other day I picked up a reprint of an important source-book in American history, Tome's narrative of pioneer life, describing conditions in the same general section of the frontier as that in which my grandfather lived; and there, in between matter-of-fact narratives of dealings with Indians, was the hoop-snake—deadly effect on the trees and all. So my grandfather was not just spinning a yarn to amuse a boy. He was telling something he actually believed to be true, but something which could

not have been true. He believed the story, because everybody in pioneer days believed it.

So the hoop-snakes rolled through pioneer life and their equivalents roll through our lives today—statements of alleged truth which never could be true, but which appear true because everybody believes them.

"Signs" Are Symptoms

Here indeed is a legitimate sphere for the function of the church as prophet; for it is the business of the prophet not only to tell us some things that will be true in the future, but to point out to us some things which are not true now. This all will concede. Perhaps not



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everybody will admit that we ought to make the most of some fashions. They, however, indicate an aroused public interest which can be used for good. At a time when a fashion in thinking lays hold of the public mind, the church has presented to it outright a social and psychological atmosphere which can be utilized for good. At the moment when men by the millions are interested in evolution, or democracy, or newer methods in biblical study, or fresh scientific discoveries, the church should use to the utmost the new fashion in thinking, instead of waiting until the next generation and boasting that the "church" has survived all these things! Much of the talk about "surviving" these fashions of thinking is about as twisted as if a community should talk about the way it may have "survived" a glorious wheat harvest. Why, even in the styles of garments which cause us so much horror and amusement, the total result in a season or two is good. If the reader does not believe that, let him just look at a picture of his mother, or of his father, or of himself, clad in the fashions of a half-century, or even a quarter-century ago.

Once more, it is said, and with truth, that the utterances of our time in voice and deed seldom mean what they say on their own account, but are symptoms of something deeper than themselves. The "signs" of the times are symptomatic. Well, what of it? The only way to study a disease is through its symptoms. The fatal mistake is in doctoring the symptoms rather than the underlying causes. Here again the psychologists, in spite of the excuses of the extremists of the newer schools, have helped us. They have shown us that if we are trying to straighten out minds that are in disorder—or that we think are in disorder—the only true method is to listen to the utterances of those minds as symptoms, encouraging them to express all that is in them. The alienist knows that the old "force" methods in dealing with mental disorder are worse than nothing, and that direct argument also is worse than useless.

The Need for Sanity

There are many good people today who think that socialism, for example, is a lunacy of the first order. I do not happen to be a socialist myself, nor do I happen to belong to the group who think socialism is lunacy. Socialism of the more serious types is a well-reasoned diagnosis of the evils of the present capitalistic system and a thoroughly thought out alternative to that system. But suppose that I believed socialism to be a set of crazy ravings. What would be the best way for me to quiet the ravings? Suppose I considered socialism to be a symptom of social aberration. If I were myself as stark mad as some capitalists seem to be whenever socialism is mentioned, I should of course begin to talk about repressive measures. If I were a little less than stark mad, I should try to argue socialism out of existence. In which case I might get the worst of it; or if I got the best of it, I should discover to my bewilderment that I had done little to socialism beyond advertising it. Socialism has been demolished many times by argument. No, we are here dealing with a symptom merely, as long as we give ourselves to argument. The disease is not in socialism, but in the present order. There are injustices and inequities which must be corrected before we can say that we have honestly met socialism.

So it is with more definitely religious matters. It does no good to meet criticism of the church with explanation and apology directed to the criticism itself, except within a limited range. There are sincere inquirers whose questions ought to be directly met, of course. It may be, too, that criticism of the church comes out of resentment against any organization which irritates men by holding before them a worthy ideal. It is indeed a vast compliment to the church to be able to rouse the wrath of many of the present day critics. Still, this is not all of the problem. If criticism of the church—and of religion, for that matter—arises out of a general restlessness which finds voice now in one complaint and then in another as soon as the first is met, the criticism is likely wholly symptomatic. It may be that the church can do nothing, for the causes may lie outside the range of church activity, but there is no

obligation upon organized Christianity today heavier than that of the study of the criticism of the Christian system to learn the underlying causes of the criticism. The criticism may need never be met directly, but possibly its flank can be turned by the church's renewed devotion to opening up deeper springs of moral vitality in individuals and society.

Each Generation for Itself

Finally, we are not to take the questionings of the present day as if they were necessarily portents of disaster. The truth seems to be that those of us who have come to middle age, or a little beyond, naturally resent questions that we tackled thirty years ago and gave up. Our resentment is seldom justifiable. If the questions are insoluble, each generation has to find that out for itself. If the questions are soluble, the fact that we have failed is no sign that the later generation must fail.

It is well that the succeeding generations are not guided by their predecessors as to what they shall ask and what they shall not ask. Even children's questions have at times immense virtue in getting veritable "posers" before us. The child asks, "Who made God?" and that sounds very silly, though some philosophers in every age muss around trying to answer. Then the child asks the question that little Peterkin asked in Robert Southey's poem, "The Battle of Blenheim." The reader will recall from his schoolbook days that on a particular evening "old Kaspar's work was done"; that on that day he had turned up in his plowing a skull on the battlefield of Blenheim; that little Peterkin wanted to know just one thing, and that was "what they killed each other for"; and that before that question Kaspar could say nothing except that "it was a famous victory." Years ago I read a book by an English militarist who was incensed at Southey's poem. He declared that the poem was misleading because it is clearly impossible to explain war to little Peterkin—which is true; and it is also true that it is fast becoming impossible to explain it to any of Peterkin's older relatives, or to anyone else. By all means let little Peterkin ask the question, and as many more as he likes. Every worthwhile revelation is an answer to a question asked by somebody. If an age asks no questions, it will get no answers.

A Questioning Age

We live in a questioning age, to be sure, and with some of the questions we can do little, for they are part of the clamor and tumult of a noisy generation. Nevertheless, the church can develop a sort of selective listening for the calls to which she alone can adequately respond. I once lived in a village on a stern bit of New England seacoast. It was said of a patrolman who walked the beach on stormy nights that he had trained himself to a marvelous form of selective hearing. He would tramp his beat through the storm, apparently oblivious to the uproar of sea and air. Wind and wave seemed to call for no response from him, but he knew scores of sounds to which he did respond on the instant—all of them sounds of ships or persons in distress. Calls that a companion-walker on the beach might not catch at all, he caught unerringly, and moreover he knew how to respond. The church of God is likewise moving through a deal of uproar of wind and wave. Happy indeed is the lot of all of us if she trains herself to discriminating precision of selective hearing, which knows the genuinely human calls, the sincere human questions in the midst of the uproar, and shows herself willing to try to answer. The very willingness to try may, to many questions, be answer enough.

I said at the outset that signs of the times, in the thought of Jesus, meant that predictable situations follow forces we see at work. The south wind blows up from the desert, and after a little it inevitably brings heat with it. When the wise man, therefore, sees the wind shift into the south, he makes whatever preparations he can against the heat. A great world upheaval has set loose upon our day volumes of speech, and changes of social climate, and revelations of inner individual and community states of mind, and genuine human calls out of the depths. The spirit of Jesus, working through that church which is his Body, can, if the church is responsive, show anew its vitality to seize out of the times the truths, and the tempers, and the deeds, which can be stamped with the values of the eternal. Signs of a passing day can point to opportunities of imperishable worth.

Five Grains of Corn!

By Ernest Bourner Allen

To whom much is given from him shall much be required. Luke, 12:48.

I will offer unto the Lord the sacrifice of thanksgiving. Psalms, 1:16, 17.

I will not offer burnt offerings which have cost me nothing. 2 Samuel, 24:24.

LONG YEARS AGO, the historian tells us, our Pilgrim forebears had the custom of putting five grains of corn upon each empty plate before the Thanksgiving dinner was served. In answer to the questions of their children, the parents explained that during the Revolution their forefathers came to such dire straits that there was an allowance of only five grains of corn to eat each day. They were evidently willing to starve rather than surrender their purposes and convictions. It was worth such a struggle to found a republic where men would be free to work out their own destiny and to worship God according to the dictates of conscience. Here was a mirror of the patriotism, the devotion, the self-sacrifice and suffering of our Puritan forefathers. So it was

Not for a wealth of golden store,
The glad Thanksgiving song of praise
From stern New England's barren shore,
Ascended in the Pilgrim days;
But for the hopes of future years;
For dangers passed; for freedom won;

And for the mingling smiles and tears
That came with every circling sun.

People who think are most apt to be thankful. The words *think* and *thank* come from the same root. In the German we have "denken" und "danken;" all languages reflect a similar connection. The giving of thanks is a disciplinary process. It is one of the nourishing mothers of a balanced sense of responsibility. The admonition, "Count your many blessings," is good psychology and good religion, though the music which carries the phrase may be neither classic nor noble. The descendants of the Pilgrims who put five grains of corn at every plate on Thanksgiving day were rendering their children and their contemporaries a real service. They were fulfilling a fundamental Christian principle of life. The Atlantic Monthly said some years ago: "It is time for our leaders to study the economic values of the propaganda of thankfulness." Something more ought to be said about the *spiritual* values! Some of our Thanksgiving day proclamations, it is true, have laid emphasis only upon *things*. They talked about crops and prosperity and freedom from pestilence. But there are other blessings!

The Glad Game

There are times when it is hard to play "the glad game," as Pollyanna did, but it can be done. If Robert Louis Stevenson were alive today, he would still sing his song of thanksgiving from his sick bed. He might not wish all of us to be "as happy as kings," for kings are not so very happy today! But he would find people who were happy, if not in rhyme, yet still in reason. If we think deeply, we can all find ground for thanksgiving, even in the drab and tedious days which crowd their way into every life. Years ago a certain countryside held the fame of Grandma C. She was a plain and honest soul and carried her full share of burdens and tasks. She had an undaunted spirit in facing all her anxieties and problems. And this story they still tell about her: Never was she hailed by friend or stranger with a conventional "How d'ye do?" but she replied with unmistakable conviction and fervor, "Fust rate—and very thankful." The mood of thanksgiving is one of the characteristic assets of every courageous soul.

Let me suggest that in every home in our land we place five grains of corn at each plate this Thanksgiving season. And before we bow our heads in grateful recognition of "the giver of every good and perfect gift," let every one around the board remind himself of five things for which his heart is glad. In such an hour we shall sympathize with Charles Lamb when he said: "I want a form of grace for setting out on a pleasant walk, for a moonlight ramble, for a friendly meeting, for a solved problem! Why not have a grace for a good book? Why have we not a grace before Milton and another before Shakespeare, and another before the Faery Queene?" Why not indeed! Why not sing the doxology over all the blessings which the good Father gives us? I challenge you to do as I have done and try to make your own alphabet of thanksgiving! Here is mine!

A appetite, apples, aliens, America.
B birds, bees, books, brooks, beauty, brotherhood, Bible.
C children, choirs, church, corn, crops, cranberries.
D democracy, duties, dawns, doughnuts.
E education, eyesight, everything.
F friends, fun, faith, flowers, freedom, father.
G God.
H hope, home, humor.
I imagination, immortality.
J Jesus.
K kith and kin, knitting, knocks.
L life, love, light, law, labor, Lincoln.
M mother, music.
N night, needs, nature.
O opportunity, oranges, organs.
P progress, play, prayer, peace, Prohibition, "punkins."
Q quests, questions.
R rest, right, ribbons, Red Cross.
S sleep, strength, sorrow, sacrifice, sunsets.
T truth, turkey, tomorrow.
U Utopias.
V victories.
W work, wife, worship, wags, wages.
X Xtras.
Y Y. M. and Y. W. C. A., yesterdays, YOU
Z zest, Zacchaeus, Zoos.

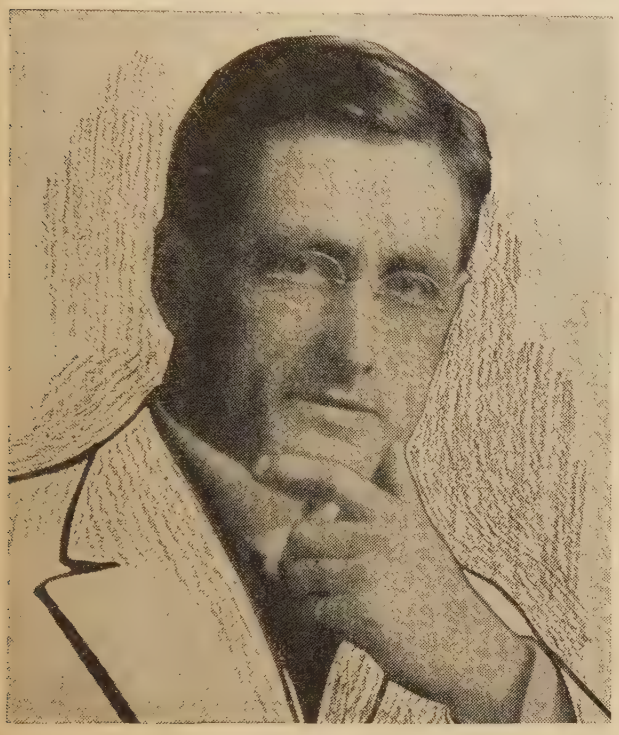
Gifts of the Centuries

We may still find use for our five grains of corn to round out our reasons for thanksgiving. For the first grain we shall find a reason based in the fruitage of history. The long struggle of the years has brought many hard-won gifts into our lives. For them we paid not a tear nor a sacrifice. Countless myriads of men and women gave the last full measure of their devotion to make them possible for us. Canon Farrar says that "nineteen centuries of toil threw their treasures at our feet." But we must go back farther than that to find the beginnings of our gifts. No man should be able to appreciate history like the Christian man. He sees a deeper meaning in the march of events and the Herculean labors performed in the world's work, than the fortuitous formation of nations, the sad and sordid struggles of life, or the fortunate development of new inventions. And this is so because, recognizing the source of every gift, he sees in history the slow but nevertheless steadily onward-sweeping movement of truth and righteousness.

Yes, forty centuries throw their treasures at our feet! The dawning consciousness of the care of God for his children; the fierce battle for freedom of heart and head and hand; the sublime thoughts of Job and John and Socrates and Newton; the immortal songs of Homer and Milton and Dante and a long line of poet seers; the masterpieces of Pericles, of Raphael and Michelangelo; the saintly lives of prophet, priest, evangelist, fisherman, monk, missionary and minister; the heroic sacrifices of myriads of martyrs for the truth; the battle agonies of unnumbered souls, who went down to unknown graves, "unwept, unhonored and unsung"—these are a few among the priceless accumulations of every age which are ours today!

It is the study of history which produces the Chris-

tian optimist. The last Thanksgiving sermon Phillips Brooks ever preached, November 24, 1892, was on the theme, "Optimism." In it he disarms the pessimist and throws down this splendid challenge: "What are the things growing greater—greater in the world today than at any time before? The sense of responsibility and the consciousness of wrong. I defy any man," he cried, "to put his finger upon any page of history when it was clearer than it is today that man has something to do with his brethren, and that they *are* his brethren. The same thing is true of nations." The decade since the world war gives force to his



Ernest Bourner Allen

contention. The outlawry of war has been written on the pages of history. The movement for peace has become essential to a vital patriotism. Furthermore, we are witnessing a new approach to all the problems of nationalism. Modern standards of business and professional ethics, of race relationships, of industrial action, are being successfully challenged and transformed by Christian ideals. Irritation and protest against them, together with much vicious action remain, but they are neither admired nor defended as widely as once they were.

The Church

The second grain of corn shall stand for the institution we call the church. The church grew out of the needs of the early Christians. They found that "birds of a feather [inevitably] flock together." They measured their individual strength against an empire, a philosophy, and the age-old drag downward, and learned that "in union there is strength." They were bound together by common loyalty to a Person. To carry out his wishes they came together. Through all the centuries the same forces have operated to create and maintain the church. It has its frailties, for it is made up of human factors, each one still in the process of being christianized. But it is still far and away the noblest, least selfish, most generous agency for human comfort and betterment which our civilization possesses. It has been buried by its enemies, denounced by cynical critics and scorned by multitudes. Still it moves on, cleansed by a vital spirit working within and by the very quality of its outward service. Millions of money come from its membership and its ministries are unprecedented, unequaled, unselfish and unlimited. Some of us owe more to it, intellectually and spiritually, than we ever dreamed or acknowledged, more than we ever deserved, more than we can ever repay. Whether "in the wildwood" or in the crowded city, thank God for the church!

> For her my tears shall fall,
> For her my prayers ascend,
> To her my toils and cares be given
> Till toils and cares shall end.

The historian tells us that "the heroic band who began the work of laying the foundations of the American nation came to plant a church." In planting a church they founded a nation. Bancroft calls those early settlements in Massachusetts "colonies of conscience." Every church through the long ages has been in some measure a "colony of conscience." Its members have been living according to standards which challenged and changed the standards of life around them. Tremendously significant social changes have come in every land where these "colonies of conscience" have been quietly, steadily, fearlessly obeying God. Macaulay and Green have told what Christian ideals did for England. In another century some historian will be able to measure its influence on New England. Those Puritan pioneers were men of conscience. They had iron in their blood. As Dr. Parkhurst says: "They set their consciences by the will of God as countrymen set their clocks by the sun. They never had to be sought for in order to be found, for they were always there, and you could always tell what time of day it was by them." The most fruitful and prolific source of every mighty movement for the betterment of men has been the church of Jesus Christ. In spite of all its lapses and failures, thank God for the church!

Personal Inspirations

The inspiration of individual lives shall be the factor for which the third grain of corn stands. The world and every one of us is rich today in the unselfish sacrifices of unknown myriads who have died that the world might be better. Let us forego sweeping the pages of history for their names and think very personally of those who have been the intimate inspiration of our own lives. When I was a student in college, Joseph Cook came to lecture at the little hilltop called Olivet. He took me into his room one day and showed me twelve pictures, in a long collapsible frame, stretched out on the mantlepiece. "These constitute my jury," he said. "Wherever I go, to lecture or preach, I take along my jury. I think what they would

say. I measure and justify my conclusions and message by their critical comment." Who constituted his jury? Here were pictures of his father and mother, of some of his teachers, and of some of the great thinkers and leaders in the work of the world. Who shall say how much his life and work were determined by their influence and ideals? We too have our jury! We too love to raise our song of thanksgiving for some sacrificial soul, of our own kin or not, who poured out life for us. Thank God for these dear ones, these friends, this jury!

Our Work and God's Love

Two grains of corn remain. One of them shall stand for our work, and the other for the revelation of the eternal love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord. "No man is born into the world but his work is born with him." It is a good thing to have work to do. Work is not a destroyer but a developer. For most men it is a veritable life preserver. We are not dolls in a universe that calls for work and doomed to be lugged about by deity or devil! We are men with work to do. Our Father's business is vast and worth while. Whether we sell goods, teach school, keep books, serve in a home, handle a typewriter, or manage men, we are servants of God, and our work helps to keep us steady, to develop our powers, to bring us peace and joy! Thank God if you have a chance to work and strength to do it; and remember with sympathy those whom misfortune or economic circumstance has deprived of this great joy.

The all-inclusive gift for which we ever praise God is the manifestation of his love. We need not be troubled if we do not find this manifestation in every circumstance or avenue where others find it. We may see his love in the glory of the sunset, in the song of a bird, in the handclasp of a friend, in the task that tests us, in the word of the poet, the song of the singer, the searching revelation of the seer, or in the Man who spake as never man spake! None of these manifestations has changed the character of God's love—they have simply helped us to understand it better. His love has not grown as we have known him more. He has loved us fully and freely from the beginning. He has not strangely or suddenly changed from a great, stern Judge into a tender Father. It is we who have changed. And he will never change in his love toward us. He will disapprove when we sin and sorrow when we wander away. But if there is any fact in the universe of which we may be certain and for which we may be thankful, it is the love of God.

"To whom much is given from him shall much be required." Gratitude must go farther than simply to say "thank you;" it must reach out in sacrificial giving and service. *The cost of being thankful is terrific!* Have you made your "sacrifice of thanksgiving?" Not unfairly may we paraphrase the poet's word:

Our Thanksgiving day is kept, indeed,
In whatso we share with another's need;
Not what we give but what we share—
For the gift without the giver is bare;
He who gives himself with his thanks, helps three—
Himself, his hungering neighbor and Me.

The Scientific Spirit in the Spiritual Realm

By Albert W. Beaven

THIS is unquestionably the age of science. In the last one hundred and fifty years the wizards of the laboratory have made such strides as to enable us, in material progress, to out-distance any and all previous eras. Alfred Russell Wallace contended that while in all the years prior to the nineteenth century sixteen great scientific discoveries had been made, twenty-four such outstanding contributions were made during the nineteenth century. While only twenty-nine years of this twentieth century have passed, it is now claimed that twenty such famous additions have already been made to our store of knowledge.

Science has moved into realm after realm, conquering new eras, discovering causes, collating facts and offering to mankind ever newer weapons with which to fight its battles and added resources with which to enjoy life. This result has been largely attained by an attitude on the part of men. We may describe it as the "scientific spirit." We have had the same material facts in existence from the beginning of human history, but we have not had the attitude of mind that has enabled us to understand these facts and utilize these resources.

Growth of Scientific Spirit

From time to time flashes of the scientific spirit were seen. Five hundred years before Christ Thales had somewhat this attitude. He believed that the facts of the world could be understood by careful investigation, that the material elements of creation obeyed certain laws and were not subject either to the caprice of the elements or the many gods who were at that time conceived to control them. He and his followers came to foretell eclipses; they declared that the earth was round; that it moved. They also brought forward certain theories that looked in the same direction as evolution does today. This movement for the introduction of the scientific spirit seemed to petrify in Aristotle.

It came back to life again, however, with Roger Bacon in the thirteenth century. Here another man claimed that the study of facts and the experimentation with matter would produce infinitely more progress than a method which exhausted itself in simply reading the records of Aristotle's impressions. He predicted that the scientific spirit would uncover far more wonders than magic had even pretended to set forth; that one day men would fly; that they would have carriages without horses and ships without oars. But not until the last century did what we call the scientific spirit begin to produce its real fruitage. This spirit I may describe as follows:

First, it proceeded on the assumption that there is a body of facts worth knowing.

Second, that there is a fundamental unity which

binds these various phenomena into the relationship of cause and effect and that the laws of cause and effect can be discovered and relied upon to be the same in each part of the universe.

Third, that man's mind is capable of finding these facts and seeking these causes.

Fourth, to find them requires an open minded seeking of truth, willingness to follow where it leads, sacrificial patience and unlimited experimentation to ascertain and establish the facts.

Fifth, that the resources uncovered by these discoveries could, and should, be applied to the various needs of humanity.

The laboratories of the twentieth century have been

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filled with men who have more or less caught this spirit. No better illustration of the method and results obtained can be given than the story of Walter Reed and his fellow workers in the fight against yellow fever. Our soldiers, and others were suffering from this terrible disease in Cuba. Then men of the scientific spirit were designated to find its cause and to indicate a cure. After attempting by experiment after experiment to isolate the microbe of yellow fever they had to admit that that method of inquiry yielded no fruitage. In spite of a common prejudice they open-mindedly turned toward another theory, namely, that yellow fever was transmitted by the bite of a mosquito. They had already discovered that this disease could not be given to an animal, it was confined to human beings. They had, therefore, to experiment not on guinea pigs as they had in many other cases, but on human beings. They must needs seek volunteers who would allow themselves to be experimented upon. The story of the willingness of James Carroll and Jesse Lazear, two members of the commission, to volunteer to be bitten by a mosquito that had filled itself with the blood of a yellow fever patient, is a story that to this day makes any one of us hold his head higher. By this experiment it was determined that there was a probability that the dread fever was so transmitted.

An Epic Story of Science

This conclusion needed, however, to be carefully re-checked. They had to establish that a person who appeared to be so inoculated was not in reality inoculated by any other method. How Privates Kissenger and Moran, two soldiers of the American army, volunteered to allow themselves, after a period long enough in isolation to show that they were free from the disease, to be stung by yellow fever laden mosquitos is one of the epics in the heroic stories of the scientific conquest of disease. But after it was clear that it *could* be transmitted by the bite of a mosquito it had still to be established that it *could not* be transmitted in some other fashion. A third series of tests was made in which men volunteered to live for a month in a house with no ventilation, in which were concentrated all the known ways of making the very air reek with yellow fever germs. When at last these men came from the quarters untouched with the disease, while those who had been living in perfectly sanitary quarters but had been bitten by the mosquito had caught the disease, it was considered proved that the method of transmission was through the bite of a mosquito. The cause had been decided, a method of cure was then outlined with the result that yellow fever has been made practically a stranger on this continent.

This is but one illustration of thousands that could be given of sacrificial determination on the part of men of the scientific spirit to learn the truth regardless of cost to themselves and make its results available for human blessing. There is no possible doubt that this scientific spirit to which we refer has been one of the largest contributors to the material progress of the last one hundred and twenty-five years. The thesis of this sermon is that this same spirit should be utilized and applied in the spiritual realm, and that when we can take it into this larger area we shall produce even far greater results that will add to human progress and happiness than have followed its application in the material realm.

There Is a Real Spiritual Realm

The thing we are recognizing more clearly each day is that the spiritual realm is a reality. Just as a body has within it a personality, which is even more real, in many ways, than the body itself, so we are coming to know that in and through the material world there is a spiritual world that is intensely real and exceedingly powerful.

Enamoured, as we have been, in the past century and a quarter with the amazing discoveries we have made in the realm of things, men had tended to feel that the material exhausted the reality of life. Thousands of men working in this field, fastening their eyes upon the things they could touch, jumped to the conclusion that here they had reached the ultimate. Slowly, though, as we have proceeded in our inquiry we have found

that even in the realm of things we soon push through the material and find ourselves again out into the spiritual. The physicist is the great prophet of this fact but we are coming to realize it in scores of other realms.

While we have been able to catalog many causes for human action that are material, such as food, wages, environment, wealth, poverty and a score of other items we are coming to realize that the area in which we need to carry our experimentation farthest, the area that baffles us to control, the area in which largest forces are moving, is that area which may be defined as the unseen or the spiritual realm. Here human motives such as hate, fear and greed operate. Here intangible forces like that of the mob spirit, of ambition, of race prejudice, of bitter nationalisms on the one side, and of good will, justice and kindliness, of hopes, dreams and visions on the other side, play their part.

A Real Task for Leadership

This is an area far more complex than the material. Not only so but it is the one area in which we seem to have made little progress. We can control things. We can throw concrete into a mould and it will stay where it is placed for countless ages, but when we deal with personality it is utterly impossible to forecast the future, or to exercise the same control that we can in dealing with things material. The very man who may be able to cure a disease that would wreck the body of his son may not be able at all to affect motives in that same son's life which, when given free play, may ruin not only his body but his whole personality. We have made great progress in controlling things, we have only begun to sense the need of control in the realm of the spiritual.

If the youth of today is looking for a section of life that is only partially charted, in which adventure is called for; for a zone in which discoveries are greatly needed, that area is in the spiritual, and not the material world. I would not say anything that would make the young man of today who has at his disposal the results of the scientific spirit in the realm of the material, depreciate the value of the things that have been discovered there, but we are waiting now for a Columbus to go out into this other area; we need today a Pasteur, a Walter Reed, an Edison, in the spiritual realm who will take the same method of open-minded approach to truth, the same unlimited willingness to experiment, the same sacrificial attitude in the laboratories of life that some other men have shown in the laboratories of the chemist and physicist. Let such investigators chart the great needs of humanity; find the cause of its needs; discover the tremendous resources that are available for the meeting of these needs, and then bring them together.

Let us take, for instance, that great conception of God that has long been in the world. Like electricity, this idea has existed in the world from the beginning of time. To my notion we have not begun to explore the possibility of the values that there are in that conception for human beings. We have used it in small areas, for our personal purposes; sometimes for tribal purposes, sometimes for national purposes, but we have not touched the hem of the garment of that idea for its larger possibilities of race service. H. G. Wells contends that race hatred is one of the most devilish destroyers of human well-being. Any of us can see the weakness and dangers that come to humanity out of our little class hatreds, our bigoted sectarian divisions, our bitter national animosities, and our racial misunderstandings. But what hope is there of ridding humanity of the burden of this disease? There can be no hope unless there is some conception big enough to override these divisions, some overpowering ideal capable of producing spiritual unification that can be thrown into this realm, which will prove the antidote for these weaknesses in human society.

That was a great conception which led some man to dream that the tides off the coast of New England could be harnessed so that by the electricity generated, the tide of industry that had been ebbing in that section of the country could be brought back again to flood power. That is a great idea that came to the physicist in the laboratory that there was confined in each atom of material an accumulation of power that might be released by the breaking down of the atom. When that was accomplished he declared that we had at our disposal almost unlimited force that could be harnessed for our blessing. How shall we compare the benefits of these proposals, even if they should be successful, with the blessings that would come to humanity if some man or men could qualify with such spiritual understanding that they might be able to draw down into human life the infinite power which could come from this imperial, a Being who has created us all, who loves us, his children of all races, and who has for us a way of life by which if we live there will come among us a spirit of cooperation for competition, of good will for hate, of justice for exploitation, and of kindliness for brutality. In the presence of such a discovery the germs of misunderstanding which create our wars, our armaments, which divide us into warring factions, threatening us even today by the cleavage between occident and orient, would fade away and like the yellow fever germ become a stranger to the planet.

Why should not thousands and thousands of young men and women who have caught a vision of the opportunity which the scientific spirit and method open to us in the realm of the material now turn their thought to the areas of the spiritual and carrying this same mental equipment go out to experiment with, to discover and to release into society through their discoveries the resources of the universe which are in the heart of God? The world awaits such an advance.

The Dynamic Christ

Or, take it in that other place of the world's greatest need; that arena where millions of human beings daily go down into defeat. This is the area where men struggle for the achievement of a worthy, self-respecting moral character in which they attain self-control for themselves and make their lives a blessing to others. Into this struggle, from the beginning of time, individuals have entered. Generation after generation of men have fought this fight against sin like those who struggle against cancer and tuberculosis; like those in

the century gone who fought a losing battle against the plague or black death or yellow fever, and they have had to admit their inability to cope with it. History is the story of a myriad moral human wrecks.

A Majestic Personality

Over against this almost universal failure of the individual human life stands that majestic personality of the Christ. We can look over the field of men, of whatever race or color or creed, of whatever age or condition, and no life stands out on such a moral height. He has actually done the thing we are striving to do. He has put into daily living the highest ideals of his soul and the ideals of the race. He stands out before us like some gigantic mountain-top over against the lower hills. What clearness of mind. What absolute self-control. What perfect moral idealism. What thorough self-lessness. What consciousness of God's power. Somehow he did the thing, and is doing the thing that we all want to do. He tapped the resources of the spiritual universe and allowed them to so flow into his life that he was able to win perfectly where millions before and after have failed so miserably.

What would happen if we could have today a million young men and women, of fine ability, of adequate training, and of the scientific spirit, who were willing to adventure into the area of Christ's personality, stand with open minds before him, to learn the secret of his character, study his sacrificial life, take his principles, incarnate his ideals and after finding them and verifying them as his, actually experiment with them in the laboratory of individual and social life? They could follow his principles and teachings, faring down the trail that he trod until they were able to bring back out of their experiments an actual knowledge of the causes of our failures and the reasons for his success. They could then challenge us in a way that we could not gainsay. We could not help following on to know and understand Christ's way of life, and apply it to personal and social conditions. This is the challenge that is open to the scientifically trained youth of our time.

Explorers of the Unseen

I do not say that we do not need men in the realm of engineering, medicine, chemistry, but I do say we desperately need the best leadership of our time in this other field. It is a field that is being abandoned rather than conquered; it is a field where the need is greatest because in a real sense the spiritual factors are stronger than the material. The unseen powers really manipulate the material things that are seen. If we deal with these material things and fail in understanding and controlling the spiritual factors back of them we are but riding for a fall. If, today, by our material progress we develop many new *things* for the home—built-in radios, telephones in every room, machinery to aid instruments of comfort—but at the same time we allow to slip out of the hearts of our people that spirit that alone can make a home out of a house, we have put the cart before the horse, we are emphasizing the secondary and losing the primary. If we invent instruments of power so fast that we have not time to create a spirit in the hearts of the people who use these instruments that will make them use them for good and not for ill, we will simply hasten our own destruction.

This is the challenge to university youth. It is they who are going to appreciate this opportunity of the scientific spirit. It is they who have had the privilege of standing where they can absorb it. During the war we had a draft law. It operated on this principle, "If you can you must," or in longer statement, "When the country is in need if you can do something that is necessary you must do it." By the same law, in this time of spiritual need, there comes the challenge to the young people of scientific training: "If you can do it, you must, for we desperately need you." Here is a chance for a life work. If in any generation we put our best brains into dealing with the things that are seen and but secondary ability into charting and conquering the more important powers of the unseen, we are in serious danger. If our strongest men and women go into material pursuits and shun callings in which they qualify to understand and control spiritual forces, we shall fail miserably. Who will hear this call and heed it? This is the new crusade. This is the substitute for war and for the old pioneering spirit of the past which conquered the west. Into this area we may say:

> The Son of God goes forth to war
> A kingly crown to gain;
> His blood-red banner streams afar;
> Who follows in His train?

The Larger Christ

By Robert E. Speer

FROM one point of view, there is no lesser or larger Christ; there is only one unaltering Christ, "the same," as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews has put it; "the same yesterday, today and forever." And it is Christ's unchangingness, with its assurance that we shall always find him there with the same love, the same understanding, the same forgiveness, the same strength, that constitutes the basis of our Christian confidence and joy.

It was generally recognized, both among ourselves and among the British Christians, that of all our hymns the one most dearly loved by men in the dark anguish of the wartime was the familiar hymn, "Abide With Me." Some have thought that the secret of the affection which men had for it lay in the words of the last verse:

> Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
> Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies;
> Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
> In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!

But others believed that it was the second stanza which gave the old hymn the first place in men's hearts:

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou, who changest not, abide with me!

That is what Christianity is; it is the apprehension of the unchanging Christ. But Christianity is not the unchanging apprehension of Christ. We thank God that he is the same yesterday and today and forever in himself. But woe to the Christian man and to the Christian church, if Jesus Christ is only the same to us today that he was yesterday and is to be only the same to us tomorrow that he is today. We and our world need more than this. And more than this is provided. Our great need in our personal religious experience, the great need of the generation on which we have fallen and which it is the will of God that we should serve, is simply the discovery of the unapprehended resources and gifts which are available for us in the exhaustless and illimitable Lord.

A New Discovery

In one sense, it is a new discovery that we need; in another sense, it is only a rediscovery of that which was apprehended of men long centuries ago. One knows how common has become the note of reproach with regard to the Apostle Paul, whom so many charge with abridging the glory and the joy and the simplicity and the fulness of Christ; but if there is one source to which we owe in anywise an adequate comprehension of what Jesus Christ was and was meant to be in the world, it is St. Paul and the illumination that has come to the church through St. Paul. What we have to do is to seek somewhere the courage and the faith that will no longer hold us back from piercing into, and being laid hold of by, the conception of Jesus Christ—what he was meant to be to men and to humanity—which Paul described under the guidance of the ever-living Spirit, and out of his own deep personal experience more than eighteen centuries ago.

We have to expand our conception of Christ, so as to recover the apostolic belief in him as the complete revelation of God and of the character of man and of the spirit of human society. The character of man is a very good place to begin, because it is here, where individual character stands in the illumination of Christ's own presence, that men get their first startling apprehension of how absolute and commanding a figure our Lord Jesus Christ is. Mr. J. B. Kerfoot alludes to this vivid exposing power of Christ and of our judgments about Christ in a review in "Life" of George Bernard Shaw's volume of plays, "Androcles and the Lion," "Overruled," and "Pygmalion." "These plays," said Mr. Kerfoot, "have just appeared in book form, with a preface on the prospects of Christianity prefixed to the first of them. In a way, this latter is a most interesting document. An estimate and analysis of the character of Christ, seriously undertaken by a brilliant and unintimidated mind, capable of looking objectively upon its own generation, is always interesting, for it invariably proves a touchstone of revelation. All of the writer that really matters has to be put into it, and here, more succinctly and concentratedly revealed than in any book ever written about him, is the essential Shaw, the fineness, the facetiousness, and the final futility of him."

Let any man bring his character or his ideals of character into this light, and something speaks to him at once that reaches beyond all that he has ever known or been and speaks of him with full betrayal to the world. Horace Bushnell writes a great chapter on "the character of Jesus, forbidding his possible classification with men," but that is not the real title of the chapter that he has written. That is what he called it, but any man who reads the chapter sees at once that it can bear a different name: "The character of Horace Bushnell revealed by his capacity to estimate the character of Jesus Christ."

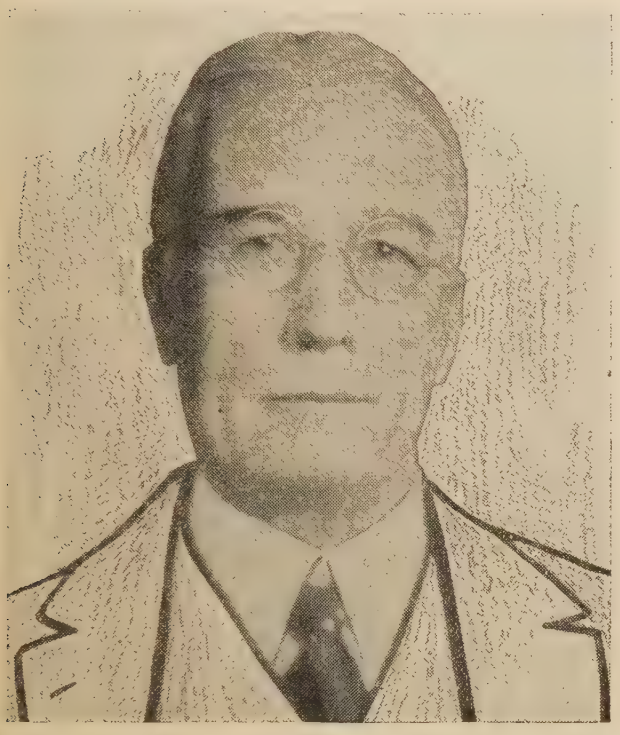
We bring our lives into the naked scrutiny of the presence of Christ and we see a vision looming above us, bigger than any we have dreamed before, and are confronted with a call to the enlargement of character, of the ranges of human hope and faith, of the possibilities of human friendship and affection, revealed in Christ, on the threshold only of which have Christian men been as yet bold enough to stand.

No Partisan Christ

It is not only this larger apprehension of Christ as the revelation of individual character that we are needing today; it is the revelation of Christ himself as the new and authentic Spirit of human society. There was a book that wielded a great influence in America, and indeed all over the world, a few years ago. In one chapter of that book, "What Is Christianity?" Harnack refers to the fact of the effort on the part of every movement of men to make a partisan figure out of our Lord, in some way to get him at their head, to have him stand for their partial views and their insular interests. We are hearing men on every hand today making a claim for a partisan Christ. The whole movement of bourbonism in our economic life has sought to shelter itself behind the figure of Christ as the justification of a static economic order in human society, as the warrant of privilege and inequality. On the other hand, the radicals who would surrender the priceless traditions of the past and all the slowly accumulated gains of our age-long struggle, seek to thrust their banner of class struggle, of radical leadership, into the hands of "the Carpenter Revolutionist." We need to realize that Christ will be made the head of no faction, the leader of no party; that Christ stands for the spirit of absolute, sacrificial, and unselfish ministry in the whole of human life, and society will continue just as we see it today, a welter of conflicting interests across the chasms within the nations and across the gulfs between races and nations, until that larger Christ comes in, who shall lay his standards of character on every man and the spirit of his broad love and equal brotherhood on all human life.

In the second place, we require such an enlargement of our apprehension of Christ today as to recover the ancient faith in him, as the limitless, all-powerful Savior. We need to be reminded of the significance of the passage in the Gospels in which our Lord asked his

disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" What was the popular estimate of Christ that was revealed in the answer which his disciples reported to their Lord? "They say that thou art John the Baptist or Elijah or one of the old prophets come back again." That was the impression that he was making in his time—the impress of power, of boldness, of courage, of faith in the unseen, no impression of weakness, of tepid acceptance



ROBERT E. SPEER

of old sayings, of inequality and limitation but of a great spirit that had burst in revolt against the weak limitations and conventional bounds of life.

One outstanding word of the New Testament is the word "power." It is useful to count in the Concordance the number of times "power" is used as compared with "love" and "hope" and "prayer." The word "power" occurs nearly three times as often as either the word "hope" or the word "prayer," and twice as often as the noun "love." The great note of Christ's work in the world, the great note of his perpetual immanence in humanity, is the note of power, the power of his resurrection. By his rising again from the dead he was "declared to be the Son of God with power."

Limiting Christ

We need in this day, as much as anything else, that larger view of Christ that will not abridge or limit his power. We need his power of fearless and penetrating diagnosis of our moral need. That is where all our schemes go wrong at the very beginning, from their superficial and frivolous interpretation of what the problem is that needs to be solved. Many times during the years that have gone by, as we felt the thrill of great impulses that were moving across the nation and the world, men said to one another, "We shall never be the same again." No, we shall never be the same again, but it may be that we shall be less and worse than we were before. An experience of destruction or intellectual and social transition will not necessarily remold and remake the character of humanity. Too often it cuts only into the structural problems of mankind; not deep down where the great streams of organic life are flowing. What we need is Christ's power of diagnosis of what the real need is, that moral and spiritual need which is deeper than the little nostrums of our day can reach.

The Power of Christ

And we need, next, that power released upon our life in larger volume to break the shackles of old habitudes, our habit of acceptance of what is practicable, our habit of acquiescence in inadequate moral achievement in life, our habit of surrender to defeat and shortcoming and moral delinquency. The power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead can do anything. Some time ago, after a Sunday at Yale, I received a letter. It ran:

> My dear Mr. Speer: I want to tell you of one result of the meeting tonight. Though I have been a professing Christian and a member of the church, I have not been conquering sin in my life in one respect, and the way the matter was put tonight somehow helped me to believe that Christ can give me victory, and I do believe in and count on him. This has been the battleground in my thought: can Christ actually overcome the circumstances and the ordinary course of consequences in human life—in individuals and in society—without waiting for the slow, natural processes of habit-breaking and habit-formation? I now know that he can. He can enable a man to right about face in an instant. If he cannot, there is no excuse for Christianity. The particular thing which helped me, I think, was the idea that Christ could help a man to get the bulge on his temptation at the first, and that he could thus actually become a different man? I am grateful for that message tonight. I am a graduate student in psychology and I think the desire to explain everything by psychological laws has been a stumbling block to me. The change in human life is as hard and solid a fact as any other, and if our philosophy will not assimilate it, so much the worse for our philosophy. The fact remains a blessing for the man who realizes it, and I am thankful I am one who does.

And what this student experienced that night in himself, we are called to experience today in human society. There are no limitations around the power of God, except the resistance of human wills. A God who was able to conquer death by the resurrection of his Son is able today to slay any foe that needs to be slain, to do any work that needs to be done, to build in our own generation the walls of the kingdom of God upon the earth. We need a larger thought of Christ's power as unhindered, as able both to reveal the real need of modern humanity, and to accomplish the work that our day needs. We remember those beautiful words that Principal Hogg has written on the title page of "Christ's Message of the Kingdom." He takes them from Principal D. S. Cairns's "Christianity in the Modern World": "For the first time in history there

appeared on earth One who absolutely trusted the unseen, who had utter confidence that Love was at the heart of all things, utter confidence also in the Absolute Power of that Absolute Love and in the Liberty of that Love to help him." We need to pass into the apprehension of Christ that gives us such a faith and of Christ himself as the finisher as well as the author of it.

The Head of Humanity

And we need such an expansion of our thought of Christ as to take him in as the New Testament conceived him, as himself the unifying and directing Head of humanity. It is the wonder of all time that the Holy Spirit was able to expand the mind of that first Christian generation so that it could accept this conception of Christ. The conception is not more true now than it has always been, but it is nearer realization. The day has gone by when we may think in any other terms than terms that are valid for all mankind. Of course, we can say that we will shelter ourselves within the boundaries of our own nation, but we can only say it, we can never do it. We can never deny or escape the facts. Life the whole world over is all one life now and we can never tear the interests of the nations asunder. Any one nation, of course, can deny itself the gain of acknowledging the facts of human life and of relating itself to the rest of the world, but it can never escape the penalties of that relationship, or of denying its reality nor ever again in human history dissever its interests, even to the least of them, from all the interests of mankind everywhere. And we may not dismiss this thought of Christ's mission to the nations by exclusive emphasis on the real and glorious truth of his primary mission to individual persons. He came to both and he sent his church both to "every creature" and to "all the nations." Indeed it is significant to note that his own language was "Preach the gospel to every creature," not "to all the nations," but "Make disciples of all the nations," not "of every creature."

And we need to pass out not only into the larger thought of Christ as the revelation of personal character, as the spirit that should give human society its ideals and power, and as the revelation of what God would like to achieve through men. We need also to let into human life the thought of Christ in the relationship which he sustains to us who believe, because potentially he sustains that same relationship to every man.

We must not ignore or dissolve away the Apostle's amazing declaration: "The head of every man is Christ," not "may be" or "ought to be" but *is*. We have to lay hold on him, and let him lay hold on us, as the Light of all the world, and to interpret the character and obligations of Christian manhood in terms of the universal characteristics of Christ as Light and Truth and be ourselves the bearers of that Light to all the darkened sections of the world. John Oxenham conceived the mission and personality of David Livingstone, whom Professor George Ladd called deliberately the greatest figure of the nineteenth century, in just such terms. He went out as light:

> "To lift the somber fringes of the night,
> To open lands long darkened to the light,
> To heal grim wounds, to give the blind new sight."

And not as the Light of the world only, but as the Life of men. The trouble with mankind today is no mere ethical trouble; it is a biological trouble. We have not the adequate forces of life within us and we never can draw out of our tepid wills and our moral feebleness the energies that alone can remake the world. We have to tap the new fountain of blood, of life, the great fountain of God's own life, unsealed in the Cross and the open grave of Christ. And we have to take him not only as the Light of the world and as the Life of man, but we have to take him individually as the Head of each of us, because the head of all humanity. We sing, "Thou, O Christ, art all I want"; but it is equally true, "Thou, O Christ, art all that all men want!" He came to be not the head of us, one by one, in the church and its brotherhood alone, but he came to be the head of all mankind. None of the other religions of social methods, of political systems, of moral ideals has the flexibility and the adaptation and the power to make it fit the needs of the living world. Only the personal faith, behind which lies the infinite person of our Lord, Jesus Christ, is adaptable to the needs of all men in all lands, in all time.

Christ and Ourselves

But that is not our problem—whether there is a larger Christ available for all. This is our problem. Let us bring it as nearly home as we can. Our problem is not about Christ; our problem is about ourselves. Do we conceive him in truth? Or have we emptied Christ of his greatness. Have we been satisfied with some small and partial figure, when the infinite and inexhaustible Lord was calling us? Have we failed him? Are we afraid to let him make us great? Are we so little and so content in our littleness that we dare not pass out of it at his call, who laughs at all this littleness and would bid us walk with him, the great free ranges of the unmeasured power of his father? Are we timid to make this known to men; to go straight into the world of our time and tell men just what we know about it, and what the sickness of mankind really is, and who alone has the adequate remedy for it? The tragedy of life in the war years lay in this: that at least 80 per cent—so it was cautiously estimated in the British armies, a little less in the Scotch and Canadian armies, and who will dare to say what percentage was among ourselves—about 80 per cent knew little more about Jesus Christ than black men in the heart of Africa, or village folk upon the roof of the world in Asia, who have never so much as learned that there is any Christ at all. We live in an unevangelized world and in unevangelized nations, and a Christ adequate for every man is asking us today not whether we think that he is sufficient but why we are so insufficient, why we have fallen so far below the kind of men that he had a right to expect that we should be. Will we begin to be that kind of men now; to believe in the Christ of the New Testament; the Christ who came to end an old order and to bring in a new day?

The Spirit of Life

By Robert Norwood

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Romans 8:1-2.

HOUGH we cannot any more understand what is meant by this ultimate victory of Jesus than the disciples of the first century could understand, yet we are in a reverent mood, sharing with them the belief that it is the completion of a life that was always uplifted. We need occasionally to be reassured of the kingliness of character. No one of us escapes periods of doubt about the kingliness of our own characters; and I suspect those periods are frequent in proportion to our growth. For that reason, we need occasionally to be reassured that our innermost self is moving toward the fulfillment of the life of Christ; that his victory is an earnest of our victory, however far away it may seem. All that we hope for, all that we strive to gain, all that we bleed to win, all that we agonize over when it is not as present with us as we could wish—all that, and infinitely more, is stored up in our reverence for the hour that marks the fullness of the victory of Jesus.

It is idle to analyze overmuch the art of the story that tells how one day, after a period of time with them, Jesus led the little group out as far as Bethany and climbed a hill. They were always climbing hills together. They liked him very well on hills. And on a hill he turned and blessed them; and while he blessed them, something happened.

The searchlight of our new science is turned steadily upon that naive story, and many in the world are trying to explain the story by saying that it was invented after Jesus died—for the reason that all our dead have ascensions after death. They have resurrections, but they are followed by ascensions. There is a time when the dead seem to come back to us. In curious, intimate ways they come back to us; but, after a while, they go on and come back no more. We feel that they have gone on; that somehow they have graduated into a new relationship with the universe; that it is wrong for us to lure them back. There must be some high fulfillment of souls over there, like an ascension following a resurrection, a completion of death, without which death itself would be such a disaster that it would indeed be better never to love, better never to marry, better never to have a friendship, better never to have an enthusiasm, than to end upon utter silence.

Jesus a Friend, Not Benefactor

That is a nice description of the resurrection and of the ascension. But to many of us the two go together. We know the need of man, concerning this event of death, to be acquainted with a demonstrator, a scientist—if the word is necessary—a specialist, who knew what he was about and who has succeeded in building the bridge. We believe that that bridge was builded, that Jesus crossed over, came back to his disciples, and stayed with them long enough. It would have been foolish for him to have stayed any longer than was necessary, for that would have robbed them of their growth and development. He came not to be a benefactor, but a friend. A friend is a sharer. A friend is one whose urge is toward the reciprocity of relationship. Jesus is no benefactor. One might throw, like Dives, crumbs to the poor man at his gate. That is being a benefactor. But a friend is one who seeks the poor man at his side and gives him a robe and a ring and a crown. Jesus is a friend like that.

Sharing Life

Having attained deathlessness, he has invited us to share it. We believe it has been demonstrated, not only in the first but in all the succeeding centuries. We believe that the transcendent lives of men and women through the ages are witness to the fact that Jesus did build a bridge, crossed over, came back again long enough to assure us that it is our inheritance; and, having assured us, went on his royal way because he was too wonderful to mar us by his overpowering personality. As you fathers and you mothers are forced at last to send your children away from home in order that they may find themselves, in order that their inwardness may be evoked and established; so the time came when the Master said to his disciples: "It is expedient for you that I go away. Freely you have received, freely give." He said to Peter, "Now you know that this thing is true, strengthen the brethren. Now you know that there are no dead, strengthen the mourners. Now that you know that we go on, strengthen the discouraged. . . . Freely you have received, freely give."

So, in the course of time, the resurrection enters into the ascension. The ascension is that moment when the visible becomes invisible, when men at last know the splendor of the immanent, when we are able to trace the invisible, having measured the Master's word to Thomas: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. . . . Blessed are they whose sonship is so fully developed that they no longer need an argument. Blessed are they when the Spirit bears witness with their spirit that they are the children of God; when all the power that was in me is manifested in them; when they multiply my Christhood with their Christhood, my Saviorhood with their Saviorhood, my Godhood with their Godhood."

A Promise Fulfilled

That is what the ascension meant to the disciples of the first century. It was also a keeping of a promise which Jesus had made: "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me. . . . I will become universal. I will no longer be a Galilean Jesus, or a Judean messiah, or a Syrian Christ, or a Latin God, or an Anglican mediator. I will be every man's Man. I will be the link with the Infinite. I will be the promise of every soul's attainment. Now go out into all the world

and make everybody understand that the hour has now come when neither in the mountain of Jerusalem, nor in the mountain of Samaria, is God to be worshiped. God is Spirit. God is universal, and everybody who has a sense of that universality shares with me the kingdom of God."

The Ascension is the profoundest moment in the church's year. How we have missed its meaning, and how we miss it again and again. Let us see if we can regain some of it, as Paul regained it. There are some of us who feel that Paul was a kind of second coming of Jesus; that somehow he had ascended beyond the understanding of the other apostles. If you look at the history of the first century, glimpses of which are given in the Acts and, of course, in Galatians, you will discover that, in some way, Jesus had suddenly become invisible even to those who knew him well, that somehow he had eluded them or escaped from them. The result was: James, his very brother and bishop of Jerusalem, became a Palestinian Christian; his interests were entirely Palestinian. He was a Zionist in the true sense of the word. He could not understand this man, Saul of Tarsus. James represented a considerable group of disciples in the first century, who were really Zionists. Listen to this question, even after the glory and wonder of Easter day: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" They were still thinking in terms of their little Zionism and their local dignities, of nationalism, not internationalism.

The Heart's Desire

For that reason, some of us feel that there was a new outpouring of the spirit of the Master from the height which he had attained, that moment, when, on the Damascus road, a voice called into a man's heart, saying: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

"Who art thou, Lord?" was the answer.

And the reply: "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest."

He had been persecuting his heart's desire. He had been persecuting the thing he loved most. It was the sudden realization that, in this man Jesus, all that he meant by God, all that he meant by holiness, met; all

A Pulpit Prayer

By Frederick F. Shannon

WE THANK Thee, our Father, for the burning bushes that beckon from life's teeming roadways. Pausing before them, we hear them uttering such various and commanding speech that we remove our shoes and stand unshod in their presence.

We thank Thee for the vast and many-branched bush of Nature; for the stars that keep their courses; for the flowers that bloom; for the sun that gives light and warmth; for the birds that wing and sing; for the soil that aches with harvests of good things; for the sheep that are folded at evetime; for the herds that graze on prairie and hillslope; for the rain that falls upon the evil and the good—for all the blessings of God in Nature we bless the Lord. On the little and the large, on oceans and on lands, on the far away and the near at hand, on the silences and the symphonies, Thou hast set the impress of thy wisdom and goodness. Turn where we may, Thou art *there* even though Thou art not *that;* for the bush that reveals Thee may also conceal Thee, unless Thou who art Spirit dost enable us to see and behold with Spirit-gifted eyes.

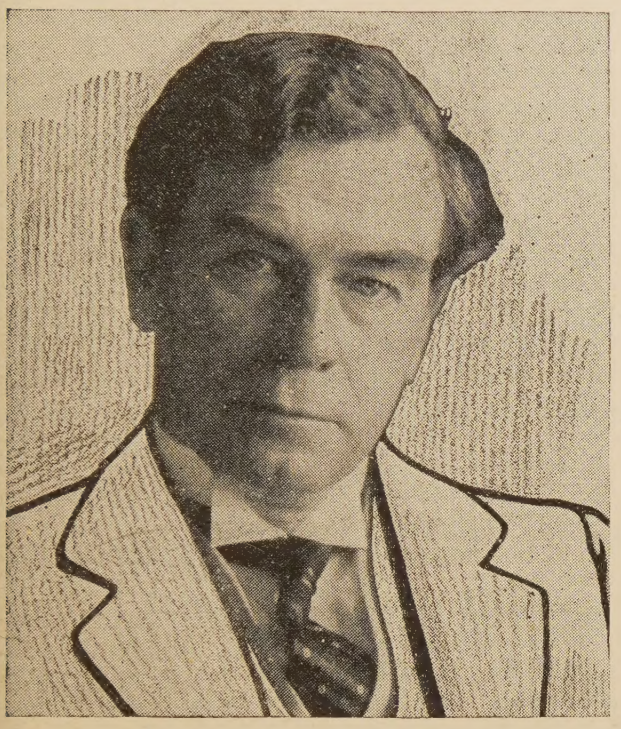
We bless Thee, O Lord, for the bush of Faith. Rich with mystery, it is ripe with heaven's own reality. It is good in Thy sight that we should be mystics and minstrels of that which gives substance to all that is rich and deep and strong in our humanity. So we thank Thee for our faith in Thee and for Thy faith in us. Grant that we may not deny Thee who canst not deny Thyself.

We bless the Lord for his wide-spreading bush of Humanity. Our human nature is Thine, even though we know not why and for what far-off ends Thou hast ordained it. Yet, standing in awe before it, we would sin not with our tongue either in praise or blame. We thank Thee for all good men, the brave and self-sacrificing lives with which the earth abounds. We give thanks for those high souls who have walked our ways of earth and time, spoken their word, done their deed, and returned to the House not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens.

So, in the spirit of thanksgiving, we would remember all of God's good gifts. For the laughter and innocence of little children; for the high-heartedness of young men and maidens; for the dutifulness of those in midlife; for the ripeness of those who walk in "the green paths of the never-old"; for schools that foster noble ideals; for the press that informs and interprets; for the task that demands all we are that we may become all that we ought to be; for the souls who unknown to any save Thee are wedded to duty day in and day out, and, therefore, manifest undying forms of beauty; for the church, within whose wide and hospitable fellowship we receive enlightenment and understanding; for the Love that forgives; for the Truth that quickens; for the Lord Christ, who is Thy best gift to our world—for all these and all Thy blessings, O Lord, we thank Thee. Accept our worship, our dreams of good, our deeds of Christliness, and grant that we may have perceiving eyes for all the burning bushes set by the Lord and Lover of all along our roadways of being. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

that he meant by righteousness and truth were met together in this man Jesus.

So some of us feel that there was a return of the spirit of Jesus to earth, because to many of his disciples he had gone up so high that they were forgetting the manner of his spirit. It was this man who met him in this new way, who later wrote the words we read this morning: "Now, if any man have not the spirit



Robert Norwood

of Christ, he is none of his." James had lost the spirit of Christ. Aye, Peter had lost the spirit of Christ. They were both going back to the mistake of the woman at the well of Sychar, the mistake of the disciple who wanted to call down fire from heaven, the mistake of so many of the disciples who in the end deserted their Master—the mistake of Peter trying to build little churches on the mountain of transfiguration.

The heart of idolatry is in presuming that certain things can be stated. There are certain things that cannot be stated. They can be lived, but they cannot be stated. They can be expressed in changed characters, but not in terms. The essence of Christianity is in the new creature. . . . "neither circumcision nor uncircumcision but a new creature" . . . the new attitude, the new glory, the new exultation. These are the things that follow upon the ascension—when one goes up to the very highest and meets the spirit of the Master, and enters upon the dignity of the repossession of the kingdom of God.

There was a return of the spirit of Jesus after the ascension. Had he not gone up to the highest, he could not have returned so universally. It is only as we let him stay in the highest that he can come to us locally. If we make him local, he cannot come to us. But if we leave him in that place which he has gained by the beauty of his character and by the glory of his spirit, he will always come to those who are ready for him, who are able to receive him on his terms. We find some of those terms in the text for today: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

No condemnation? Are we in Christ Jesus? How do we know? How do we know that Christ is in us? How do we know that the ascended Christ has given us the power of his spirit, so that we may go to the end of the earth with his gospel? How do we know? . .

If there is no condemnation in us for anybody, we are there. If, however, there is a tendency to condemn others, we are not in Christ. Let us be on our guard against the sneer and the bitter word. We do not need to be on our guard against bitter blows. They hurt only our bodies, not our souls. But we do need to be watchful of that which kills the soul—the bitter word and the wounding sneer.

"Ah," but you say, "have I no right to be sarcastic? Must I always speak gentle words?"

What Do You Want?

If you are in Christ Jesus, you will speak as he spoke; you will think as he thought; you will feel as he felt. What do you want? Do you want the ascended life? Do you want all of the gospel? Do you want only the little child of Galilee; only the lovely lad in the temple; only the strong young prophet coming at last out of the wilderness with a new word for the human race; only the healer and the forgiver and the helper; only the one who will bind up your wounds when you have been bruised on the stones of life; only the one who will whisper gentle, kind words to you when the hour of parting comes? Is that all you want?

Not if you have seen Jesus! If you have seen him, you will want to be Jesus. You will want to have his power. You will want that power working through you. The universal church must want this power above everything else—the power to speak and rebuke the storm of this warlike, scoffing, contemning, critical world, and say: "Peace, be still!" And there would be peace if the church could say that.

For, "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." As we begin to understand the kingdom of God, we discover that there are babies in it, as well as fathers and mothers; that the lame and the blind are there as well as the strong and the seeing; that, in this kingdom, God is always working in a mysterious way his wonders to perform. When we have learned this lesson, we shall run no risk of hell fire by calling our brother a fool when we sneer at him, spread bad news about him, tell stories of his poor frailties. Think of saying, "Fool, fool!" to God's image and likeness! We shall learn that as we go on, and, with Paul, forget what lies behind us.

Waiting for the Power

How wise to forget our follies, our blunders, our sins. These things we must forget who have seen the ascended Lord. It is our business to go back and wait

for the power from on high that will open our mouths with a new speech—speech so wise, so clear, so full of understanding and authority, that they who hear will listen, follow, and believe.

"Forgetting those things which are behind, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." A high calling? It is never a low one, for God calls us to our highest. He demands of intellectual men their finest mental qualities; of heroes their highest courage; of gracious women their purest and holiest spirit; of artists their most creative mood; of saints their most utter self-forgetting. God always calls us to our highest. He calls us beyond the sin of the second best to the glory of our bleeding best.

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who stand in the Master's presence. When we stand in his presence, we must stand barefooted. The sandals of old journeys are forever cast away. We are on a new road—an upward road—that climbs to such genius of spiritual comprehension that we begin to see his glory everywhere. We no longer see men as trees walking, but as gods growing. Then we wonder at the patience of God, his generosity, his eager rush toward us while we were still a great way off, so eager to put on us the robe and the ring and the crown of welcome.

Oh, the aching, tender, gentle heart of God, that wants to share with his sons the dower of divinity, as he shared it with Jesus! That is the meaning of the ascension. Here is the heaven of the saint—and it must be our heaven, our glory, and our gladness. We must not go out of this church humbled or frightened. We must go out like princes, wearing our new robe, glad for the luster of the ring that has been given to us, and wondering if the crown on our brow is as beautiful as the crown we discover on the brow of him whom yesterday we despised and hated, slandered and hurt.

No condemnation any more in the heart of those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh as they used to walk, but now and forever after his Spirit. For, you see, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the old degrading law of sin and death.

We Thank Thee

NOT for our lands, our wide-flung prairie wealth,
Our mighty rivers, born of friendly Spring,
Our inland seas, our mountains proud and high,
Forests and orchards, richly blossoming;
Not for these, Lord, our deepest thanks are said
As, humbly glad, we hail this day serene;
Not for these most, dear Father of our lives,
But for Thy love that in all things is seen.

We thank Thee not for prestige born of war,
For dauntless navies built for battle stress;
Nor would we boast of armies massed for strife;
These all are vain, O Lord of kindliness.
What need have we of swords and bayonets,
Of mighty cannon belching poisoned flame!
Oh, woo us from the pagan love of these
Lest we again defile Thy sacred name.

We thank Thee, Lord, on this recurring day,
For liberty to worship as we will;
We thank Thee for the hero souls of old
Who dared wild seas their mission to fulfill.
Oh, gird our hearts with stalwart faith in good,
Give us new trust in Thy providing hand,
And may a spirit born of brotherhood
Inspire our hearts and bless our native land.

THOMAS CURTIS CLARK.

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The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

THE VISIT of Great Britain's Prime Minister to the President of the United States to discuss together the problems in which are involved the mutual good will of the two nations and the welfare of the whole world was not only the event of the month but of a decade. There have been times since the war when a bad mood seemed to be developing between these Anglo-Saxon peoples. The first task which the new labor government undertook upon taking office was to effect so basic and broad an understanding with the United States that whatever specific tensions might arise at any future time the mutual confidence between the two peoples could not be shaken. Negotiations began last summer looking toward an agreement as to the relative strength of the two navies. Through Ambassador Dawes a proximate and substantial agreement was reached. Mr. MacDonald therefore crossed the sea to complete this agreement and to consider other elements of controversy. On his departure the joint statement of President and Premier made clear their belief that in the light of the Kellogg Pact the historic problems were all soluble. Great Britain at once issued a call for a conference in London next January of the five leading naval powers of the world. The call is based upon the hypothesis that the pact outlawing war is to be taken seriously, as meaning exactly what it says. Mr. MacDonald's speeches in the United States were characterized by simple and direct earnestness. He believes that the time has come when the nations must "take the risks of peace." There are risks in the old policy of armed preparedness; there are risks in the new policy of trusting the honor of one another. But the risks of the new order, he declared, are far less than the risks of the old.

The Book of the Month

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY GOD? *By C. H. Valentine. The Macmillan Company, $2.00.*

THIS AUTUMN has been prolific of books on God. I have read six of them since September first. I kept this little editorial in mind, for it was my desire to recommend to the ministers of the land the book that seemed to me to be the best contemporary book on God. I have no hesitation in making my choice. This work by Valentine is what I have been looking for. It takes the concepts of the new science, and moves with them, a single step at a time, toward a lofty and rich conception of God. It is really amazing how much theology you can take right off of the lips of science. Mr. Valentine does not start with any theological dogma; he starts with the concepts which scientists themselves are now using. The concept of evolution as a creative process issuing in new forms of reality is one of these. It has profound significance for theism. The "reflex arc" concept of stimulus and response which dominates biology and psychology is another concept rich with theological implications. It is this scientific idea upon which a mechanistic philosophy has been based. But Valentine explores it and discovers that instead of supporting a mechanistic view, it supplies the essential technique for valid religious experience. Religion, the author says, is "the response of man to a responsive reality." He goes on to find personality, communion, saviorhood, fatherhood, in the Reality with which man has responsive relationship. The book registers that decisive turn of a corner which the scientific mind of today is making. But it goes farther in the new direction than any other book I have seen. It is not difficult reading. For minds perplexed amid the confusion of this transition period in scientific thought, and for teachers of religion who have to minister to such minds this book is of inestimable value.

A Thought for the Month

OUR FAITH always depends on some one else's faith. We cannot conceive of ourselves as possessing a vigorous faith in God if all around us and behind us there was atheism. Our own inner life reflects the piety of our fathers and mothers, the long history of the church and of humanity. Our trust in Something beyond ourselves is sustained by the fact that others with whom we come in daily contact trust in Something beyond themselves. God is a social possession. A cynical generation like that which emerged from the great war weakened the supports of faith in the soul of every man. Religion is a kind of contagion; it is catching; it thrives on testimony more than on arguments. When I see a man bear bravely his misfortune or his burden and still keep his grip on God, I cannot help taking some part of his fine faith into my own soul. God is more real to me because of my contact with such a faith-filled man. But this faith-filled man has caught his insight and his courage from others—perhaps from his own father or from a business partner or from a saint like Francis of Assisi, or from Abraham Lincoln, or from Paul, or from a little child. We are compassed about with a cloud of *witnesses*—testifiers by life and word to the faith that is in them. We are ourselves creators of faith in others. Just as our own faith falters when others to whom we look for strength prove unworthy, so others falter if we fail. Each of us is a living epistle, an apostolic argument in the flesh, known and read of all men. Christ's power in our lives derives from this spiritual interdependence of men. He is called the author and finisher of our faith, by which is meant that so long as we keep seeing him we cannot wholly disbelieve in God.

Charles Clayton Morrison

In the DECEMBER ISSUE of

THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY PULPIT

Four Christmas Sermons

ERNEST FREMONT TITTLE
FREDERICK F. SHANNON
GEORGE W. TRUETT
MILES H. KRUMBINE

Two New Year Sermons

GAIUS GLENN ATKINS
FINIS S. IDLEMAN

It is the policy of this periodical to *anticipate* the high days of the church year and of our national life, thus providing for the minister inspiration, suggestion and atmosphere for his own preaching task.

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Two things, may we suggest:

(1) Send us your order, now, for a copy of Valentine's "What Do We Mean by God?" (Price $2.00.)

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